

Appl. No. 10/612,114
Amdt. Dated Apr. 12, 2004
Reply to Office Action of January 12, 2004

REMARKS

Applicant appreciates the allowance of claims 4-15.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Rayburn. Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Johnson.

In response to this, applicant has amended claim 1 to include all of the limitations of original claims 1, 2 and 4. Therefore, amended claim 1 is in condition for allowance. Claim 3 is also allowable since it depends from claim 1. Claims 2 and 4 are cancelled without prejudice.

Claims 16-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Johnson et al.

Regarding claim 16, an extender defined therein comprises spaced first and second housing portions respectively defining first and second mating sections thereof, a plurality of juxtaposed first printed circuit boards with thereof front edge regions disposed in the first mating section, a plurality of juxtaposed second printed circuit boards with thereof front edge regions disposed in the second mating section, and a plurality of cables **MECHANICALLY** and electrically connected between rear regions of both said first printed circuit boards and said second printed circuit boards, respectively.

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As particularly shown in FIGS. 5, 14, 18, 28 and 30 of Johnson et al., there is disclosed a modular communication system comprising an in-feed module 14 with a pair of first circuit boards 186 received therein, a pass-through connector 22a with a pair of second circuit boards 66 received therein, and a main communication module 20. The main communication module 20 includes a plurality of cables 40 and a pair of terminal blocks 38 connected at opposite ends of the cables 40. The first and the second circuit boards 186, 66 are electrically and detachably connected with each other through the engagement between the terminal blocks 38, the in-feed connector 14 and the pass-through connector 22a. In other words, the cables 40 do **NOT mechanically** connect with rear regions of the first and the second circuit boards 186, 66, respectively, but mechanically connected with the contact plate 42 on which the resilient contacts 44 are mounted and detachably engage the circuit board 186, 66. On the contrary, claim 16 clearly defines that the cables are **MECHANICALLY** and electrically connected between rear regions of both first and second printed circuit boards, respectively.

Under this arrangement, in Johnson unless there is other external auxiliary securing device such as the enclosure, the neighboring connector (22) and the in-feed module (14), both of which includes the printed circuit boards therein, can NOT obtain the reliable support to maintain the relative positions by therebetween the communication module (20) including the distribution cables (40, 36). In oppositely, in the instant invention by means of the direct mechanical connection between the cable and the printed circuit board incorporating the housing (2) integrally enclosing the cable and the printed circuit boards, the full assembly essentially being of a single piece, functions as a self-retained extender with the reliable alignment between the first and second sets of printed circuit boards.

Therefore, claim 16 is patentable over Johnson et al. Claims 19-20 and new

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claim 21 are also patentable over Johnson et al. since they depend from claim 16.

Claim 17 depending from claim 16 further recites that at least one set of cable clamps fasten said cables together.

Examiner alleged that a set of **cable clamps** is disclosed by Johnson et al. but failed to identify them. Applicant hereby requests that the Examiner identify the element which can be regarded as the cable clamp. As a matter of fact, Johnson et al. does **not** disclose a set of **cable clamps** to fasten the cables 40 together. Therefore, claim 17 should carry more patentability over Johnson et al. in addition to its dependency from claim 16.

Claim 18 depending from claim 17 further defines an intermediate housing portion respectively connected to the first and second housing portions and protectively enclosing said plurality of cables.

Referring to FIGS. 1 and 4 of Johnson et al., there is disclosed a plurality of space-dividing wall panels 26 to partition a plurality of workstations 12. Each wall panel 26 defines a raceway 28 to mount the main communication modules 20 therein. The raceway 28 does **NOT connect** to the first and second housing portions. Therefore, claim 18 should carry more patentability over Johnson et al. in addition to its dependency from claim 16.

In view of the above claim amendments and remarks, the subject application is believed to be in a condition for allowance and an action to such effect is earnestly solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,
Wu, Jerry

By 
Wei Te Chung

Registration No.: 43,325
Foxconn International, Inc.
P. O. Address: 1650 Memorex Drive,
Santa Clara, CA 95050
Tel No.: (408) 919-6137